



A Thanksgiving to Remember in Oldtown

When the golden pumpkins rolled in from the hills and the apples were picked, the whole town hummed with the buzz of harvest's end. This meant one thing: Thanksgiving was near! The grown-ups, like Aunt Lois and Aunt Keziah, whispered secret recipes around the fire, their voices dropping to magical hushes, especially when they discussed the mysterious power of mace in corn fritters.

We kids got busy, too! Our job was chopping up mince for pies – oh, how our arms ached! We pounded cinnamon, allspice, and cloves in an old, thumpy mortar. The whole house echoed with our pounding, like a drumbeat leading up to the big day.

Back then, everything was raw and rough, even the salt. It was our task to wash, dry, pound, and sift it. Usually, chores like these would make us grumble, but Thanksgiving prep was different – it felt like we were magicians in the kitchen, helping create a feast.

As Thanksgiving neared, our grandmother's kitchen turned into a busy hub, drawing in even the wandering tribes who knew of her generous spirit. The great cider barrel was always ready to serve a mugful to anyone who dropped by. Aunt Lois sometimes frowned at the hubbub, but Grandmother would simply recite verses from the Bible about being kind and giving, her words echoing above the kitchen clamor.

Sam Lawson, a lanky, easy-going fellow, often strolled in, telling long, winding tales that always ended with Grandmother handing him a turkey for his family. Off we'd go, following Sam, bearing mince and pumpkin pies for his kids.

Thanksgiving week was a whirlwind of baking and cooking. The old brick oven, hot and crackling, was the heart of it all. It seemed to

understand the importance of its task, perfectly baking pies and cakes while we were away at church, listening to the Thanksgiving sermon.

When the day finally came, our house was a hive of excitement. Cousins, aunts, uncles, everyone chattered and laughed, sharing stories and news. Uncle Bill, just home from college, stirred up a storm of fun. The best room was thrown open, its usual chill chased away by a roaring fire.

The dinner was a marvel – turkeys, chickens, pies of all kinds! We kids gazed in awe at the spread. After devouring as much as we could, we sang an old hymn with Grandfather leading. Uncle Fliakim's high voice joined in, like a cricket chirping in tune.

Later, the house buzzed with laughter and stories. Uncle Bill had everyone in stitches with his tales. The adults recalled their younger days, and even the serious Aunt Lois couldn't help but smile.

Then came the dance! The floor was cleared, and everyone, young and old, joined in. Even Grandmother, with a twinkle in her eye, took a few steps, saying she remembered how in the 'Pilgrim's Progress', even Mr. Despondency and Miss Muchafraid had danced.

By nine o'clock, the magical day wound down. We were tired but happy, our hearts full of the joy and warmth of Thanksgiving at Oldtown.